

EPA Officials Tell Arkwood Test Results

OMAHA — Although more chemicals have been found in the soil and water surrounding the Arkwood site near here, representatives of the Environmental Protection Agency said they were not of

dangerous amounts.

Ellen Greeney and Ruth Izraeli met with several Omaha area citizens at the High School cafeteria Thursday night in an open house to answer the public's questions about the third round of samples collected recently near the Arkwood Superfund site.

The closed Arkwood site is a former wood-treating plant and is one of 10 Arkansas sites being handled under federal Superfund provisions for the nation's most hazardous sites.

According to an Arkwood fact sheet, during the last three sampling periods (May, 1987, April 1988 and July 1988) 15 residential and city wells were sampled. Contaminants were detected in only one residential well, which included 5 parts per million of phenols. However, this well was resampled in June and July and did not show any contamination. The data from all other wells sampled show they are not affected by the Arkwood site.

Thirteen springs have been sampled and New Cricket Spring is the only one which showed detectable levels of contaminants. Pentachlorophenol was found at levels of about 2 parts per million.

The fact sheet says that Cricket and Walnut creeks were also sampled with no contaminants being detected in either one. Two samples of rainwater runoff from the site were tested and did not contain any contaminants.

Officials say that since last spring,

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90 soil samples have been obtained to identify the extent of contamination at the Arkwood site. Most frequently found at the site are PCP and a group of chemicals derived from creosote known as polynuclear aromatic hydrocarbons. The highest concentration of PCP found at the site is 6,800 parts per million which was identified in the old treatment/drip tracks area.

In addition to PCP and PAHs, low levels of dioxins and furans have been detected at the site. However, the most toxic and well-known type of dioxin was not identified at the site, officials say. The low-level dioxins and furans found do not pose a significant risk, officials said.

Soil samples were also obtained from sediment in the drainage ditches adjacent to Cricket Spring and the railroad tracks as well as in the Cricket Creek and Walnut Creek channels. Low concentrations of PCP and PAHs were detected in some of the drainage ditch samples closest to the site. No contaminants were found in the bottom sediment from Cricket and Walnut creeks.

The current samples are part of a study being paid for by Mass Merchandisers Inc., of Harrison, which used the property at one time.

EPA officials said that Mass Merchandisers had installed a rain gauge on-site and has constructed a stream flow measurement device on Cricket Spring to determine the quantity of PCP flowing from the spring and the time it takes for the spring to respond to rainfall events.

Two onsite geophysical surveys were also conducted to gather information on subsurface features such as sinkholes.

Ms. Greeney said that the next round of water well/spring samples is planned for October. However, she said plans may change because this round of sampling should be obtained after a significant rainfall.

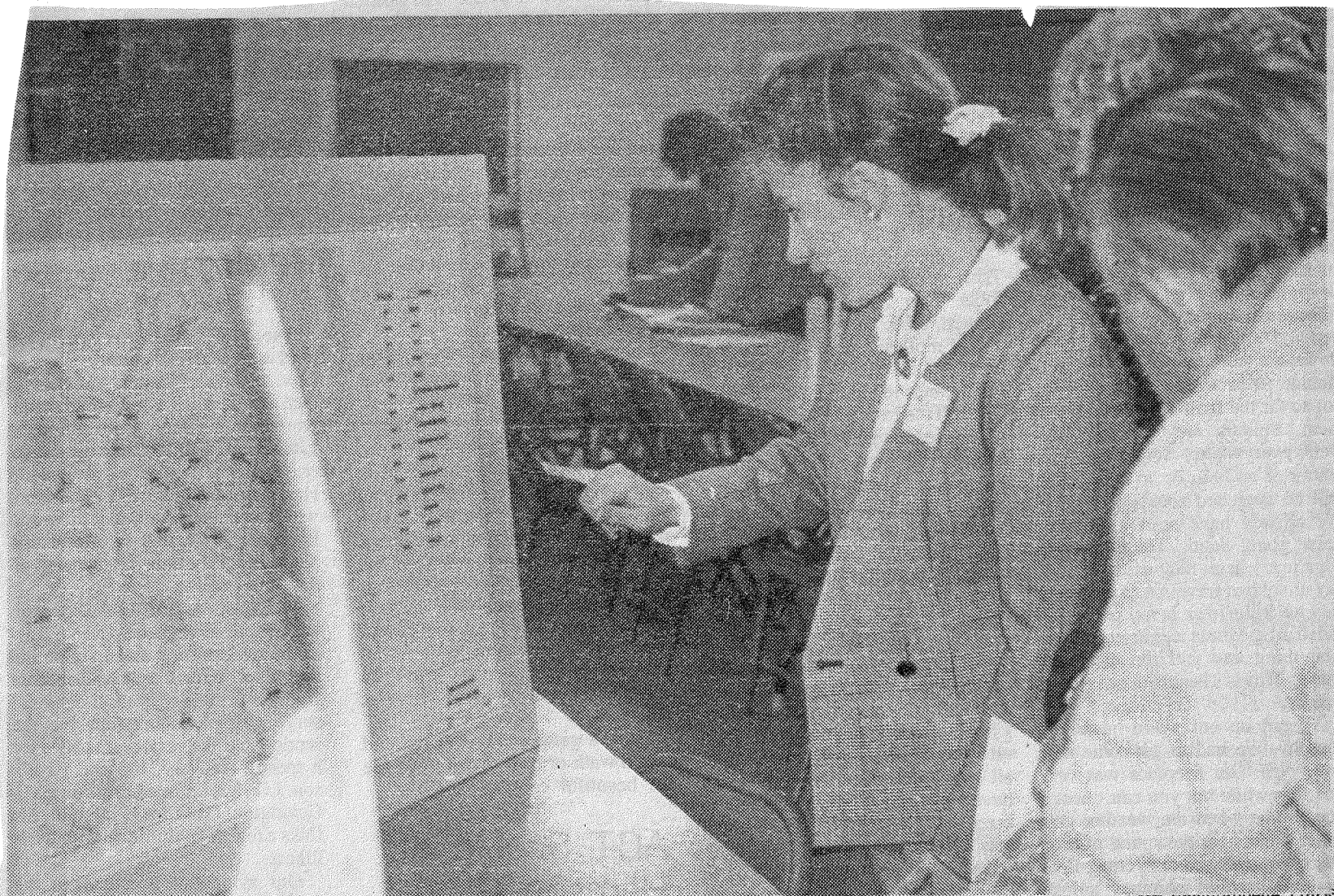
Ms. Greeney said EPA planned several more surveys and that a proposed plan of action should be ready for public comment in early 1990.

The plan will list the nature and extent of contamination and several ways to solve the problem.

A public hearing will be held so that the EPA may gather input, Ms. Greeney said, adding that officials will then sign a final finish order.

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Staff Photo/Amelia H. 11-21-91

RUTH IZRAELI, of the Environmental Protection Agency, speaks with an Omaha area couple Thursday night during an open house called to answer questions about testing results at the closed Arkwood wood-

treating plant. Arkwood is one of 10 Arkansas sites being handled under federal Superfund provisions for the nation's most hazardous sites.